

Trial Team Council Representatives



Edstaston PCC Reps

Claire Sadler
Bryn Thomas

Whixall PCC Reps

Ray Williams
(or Terence Matthews)

Fauls PCC Reps

Liz Kempton
Heather Ridgway

Readers

Bridget Hodges
Malcolm Rigley

Prees PCC Reps

Dot Henderson
Marjory Jones

UB Treasurer

Phil Hodges

Tilstock PCC Rep

Joan Hockenhull

Clergy

Sue Armstrong
Rich Clarkson
Judy Hunt
Paul Wignall

Whitchurch PCC Reps

Phil Pettitt
John Stokes

TEAM TIMES



S Shropshire

November 2015

N North

6 Six

Edstaston, Fauls, Prees, Tilstock,
Whitchurch & Whixall

Introduction

This edition of Team Times comes at an important point in the life of the parishes of Shropshire North Six (SN6). We agreed in the autumn of 2012 to have a period of working together more closely. We began gradually, thinking that we would reassess after approximately 3 years. In the spring of 2014, all the PCCs came together to discuss what areas of mission and ministry would be best worked on together and what was best to remain at individual parish level. The results of this discussion formed the basis for a joint Mission Action Plan (MAP) with three main areas – see later. This MAP covered 2014 and 2015. On the same day in March 2014, we discussed how we could make decisions that affected all six parishes in a timely fashion. The results of this discussion led to the formation of a Trial Team Council, with representation from all six parishes and with an agreed remit. This Trial Team Council (TTC) started work in September 2014, with the support of all 6 PCCs given for a two year period.

Next year, therefore, is the year in which we need to decide 'where we go next'.

Joint Meeting of PCCs

On Saturday 17th October, there was a meeting for all PCC members. This followed the 'post-it' consultation in the six parishes about how congregation members viewed our progress in working together.

In the light of the 'post-it' comments and discussions in individual PCCs, people were asked to talk together and come up with the two or three most important questions they had about continuing to work together and also suggestions of two or three changes we could make in how we work together that would be beneficial for the next 12 months.

Later, we moved on to look at the fruitfulness or otherwise of the 2014/5 MAP and how we should adapt and develop this for 2016.

Lastly, we looked at some of the options available for the future of the SN6 parishes – whether remaining together or not.

Last meeting of the Trial Team Council

Two days later, the Trial Team Council met and began to discuss the issues raised. This edition of our Team Times is to communicate where we're up to; there will be another Team Times later in the year after the next TTC meeting at the end of November

Marjory Jones (TTC Secretary)
Judy Hunt (TTC Chair)

The questions about the future and the suggestions made for beneficial changes fell into a few themes:

Working together: pace and emphasis

Some wonder if we are trying too hard to integrate too quickly and there are underlying concerns about the tension between support for each parish individually and our life together. Time and energy are needed for each parish to continue its mission and ministry and some feel that little is left over for anything else. Others feel that it's important to get to know each other so that we can know ways in which we can support each other and begin to understand what resources of skills and interests could be shared. One hoped-for change expressed was for 'more co-operation and understanding'.

Questions not yet discussed by TTC

Can there be Specific Services for Baptisms?

How does the size of Whitchurch affect SN6?

Do all want to work together? X2

Will there be proactive engagement from all 6 parishes?

Suggestions made on 17th October for 2016 MAP not yet discussed by TTC

Areas to feed into the MAP at the next meeting, along with the MAP discussions from 17th October:

Inter-congregational prayer fellowship

Joint Holiday Club

More services with links to children to build upon

Social opportunities to meet to get to know each other

Discerning, developing and deploying the gifts and skills of lay people in all aspects of our parishes' mission and ministry



Conclusion

Thank you for reading this.

If you have questions to feed in, comments you want to be considered, suggestions you would like discussed and/or help you would like to offer, please contact a member of the Trial Team Council:

see overleaf

Concern about workload on Rev'd Judy

TTC comments:

Some of this workload comes about because of having to chase up things that have been agreed at TTC
All TTC members and all PCC members need to take responsibility for seeing things through
Relates to the next area:



Improving Communication



Questions asked by PCC members included:

Can we improve congregational communication?

Can we improve communication between parishes and congregations

How can we liaise about diary dates?

Is the pew sheet meant to represent all parishes as Whitchurch events appear to dominate?

TTC comments and suggestions:

Team Times to communicate from the October meetings

TTC members to ensure that the PCC members who were not present on 17th October have opportunities to chat about what came up

PCC members to take responsibility for chatting to congregation members about what is going on in SN6

Revd Rich has set up an SN6 Shared Online Calendar; PCC members will be told how to access this. Responsibility of each PCC to ensure it is kept both accurate and up-to-date.

The pew sheet is for all parishes. Whitchurch is the largest and busiest parish so likely to have more in the diary section. Many of the notices are not from Whitchurch – some of these are moved to a separate (yellow) insert for Whitchurch congregation members

TTC suggestions:

Perhaps the emphasis on expecting most people from all 6 parishes to participate needs to be on the joint services more than the social events.

Social events, however, should continue as they will help to provide the 'glue' for trust and future working together.

Keeping all 6 PCCs

Questions were asked about whether the future envisaged is for all 6 PCCs to continue, as separate entities with their own finances, or not. Some also wonder about the Bishop's view on this.

TTC comments:

The model all PCCs agreed to try to work towards is that of a Team with all 6 PCCs continuing

Any decision to change this direction will be from PCC voting decisions

We can ask the Bishop for his view at the open meeting we are having with him on the evening of Tuesday 14th June 2016

PCCs will need to think about viability: energy to engage in mission and ministry – serving the community, people willing to be church wardens and PCC officers, congregation numbers, building issues and finances

Union of parishes might be a way forward at some point

Money given to each PCC stays with that PCC

It's important for us to keep in mind that, whatever the future arrangements are, they need to be those which can support growth – encouraging new disciples and deepening of discipleship for all – becoming more Christ-like in our thinking, feeling and acting.



Ministry resources – personnel:

Questions were raised about the future clergy staffing and hopes expressed about the use of lay people's gifts and skills.

TTC comments:

Clergy staffing will not stay the same.

We have the benefit of Revd Rich with us as a training curate at present but when he moves on, we may never have another training curate and we will certainly be without for a year or more.

All the other three clergy are 'no longer young' (!) and so their energy may decrease over the next three years

At present we have three Readers (two licensed and one in training); one may well move out of the area

It is the TTC's responsibility to get this message across

We need to build lay ministry now, whilst we are relatively well resourced, if the future is to be a positive one; this needs to feed into our MAP for 2016

Rota of Readers and clergy for Sunday Services

There was strong affirmation for continuing the practice of Readers and Clergy moving around the parishes for Sunday services.

TTC comment:

Noted with interest as this might not have been the case



Love. Grow. Serve.

Role of Clergy

There were a number of different aspects to this area

Can there be more 'hands on' by Clergy?

The TTC wondered 'where this question was coming from':

Is it non-attendance at Social events?

Is it lack of visiting members of the congregation at home?

Is it 'visibility' in the various communities?

TTC comments:

Question likely to have arisen from lack of visiting of congregation members – and possibly more general visiting of parishioners

Expectations tend to unrealistic and harking back to a time when United Benefice parishes each had a priest and Whitchurch had a Rector and 3 curates.

Will take time to change – so that a lay person's visit is seen as 'the church visiting'

Clergy need to delegate in this area as in others (e.g. Revd Judy delegates all home communions that are in people's houses but continues to lead Communion in the Residential homes)

Revd Paul pointed out that visits undertaken by clergy may well be to "non-church parishioners" and therefore 'unseen'

Is administration being done at the expense of pastoral work?

Could Revd Judy delegate more to other clergy and Readers?

Could clergy, other than Revd Judy, have more administration support?

TTC comments:

Church life is not immune from the demands of the 21st century such as Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Risk Assessments – this load has increased dramatically in the last 30 years

Good administration is important pastorally

No specific suggestions for delegation were forthcoming

Administration support for booking of weddings, baptisms and funeral was discussed – currently all down to the four clergy; would need a full-time administrator – and the function of this person would be more akin to a business manager. Is this a model to pursue? A 5 year plan? How would it be funded? If based around volunteers – how would we manage the volunteers and how would cover be guaranteed?